



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **TRANSPORTATION CRACKDOWN KEEPS KIDS SAFE** *DOZENS OF PROVIDERS ACROSS THE STATE CITED FOR VIOLATIONS*

NASHVILLE—The Tennessee Department of Human Services child care licensing division recently wrapped up its annual safety crackdown on providers that transport pre-school children. Nearly 400 unannounced inspections were performed statewide from June through early August. The transportation crackdown is performed each year to ensure providers are following DHS licensing rules and keeping the children safe during the extremely hot summer months.

Seventy-six providers were “put on notice” due to serious violations. These problems included: failure to conduct walk-throughs of the van or bus; failure to have drivers fingerprinted or drug tested; no transportation training for drivers. Four agencies voluntarily suspended their licenses to transport because they failed to have the mandatory Department of Safety vehicle inspections and no transportation plans. One agency was put on probation for having no transportation logs at all. Keeping accurate logs helps ensure that providers know exactly where all the children are at all times and that no children are left on the van or bus.

“While it is always disturbing to discover providers that still have problems with this high-risk area of their operation, we are pleased to be finding fewer critical violations each year,” said DHS Commissioner Gina Lodge. “Most providers across the state are working hard and should be commended for keeping the children in their care safe. We know this crackdown is working to correct problems and prevent tragedies.”

Since 1997, four Memphis children have died after being forgotten in hot child care vans. Sunburn and dehydration are the most common risks of briefly leaving a child in a vehicle in the hot summer heat. Temperatures inside a closed vehicle during hot weather can rise over 107 degrees within minutes. Children left inside can suffer heat stroke, brain damage and death.

Human Services licenses 3,700 child care agencies in Tennessee, and 22 percent of these offer transportation. While some agencies only transport during the school year, others offer this service year-round. These are the agencies that were the focus of the crack-down this summer. DHS licensing staff will now begin focusing on the providers that offer transportation to and from home and school.

If you witness transportation or other child care violations, please call the Child Care Complaint Hotline at 1-800-462-8261. This number is posted on every licensed child care van or bus. For more information on child care licensing, visit: [http://state.tn.us/humanserv/adfam/cc\\_main.htm](http://state.tn.us/humanserv/adfam/cc_main.htm)

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